

# Budget Q&A re Transportation and Sustainability

## *Article 50*

In the interest of time, I asked my questions about the Town FY 23 and capital budgets of Town officials last week.

Publishing that exchange here means I will not take up time with Q&A on the floor of Town Meeting.

Adam Auster  
Precinct 3

**Question to the Town Manager:** My question concerns the town's Sustainable Transportation Plan and its Net Zero Action Plan, which concerns climate change goals. I see these two efforts as closely connected.

In this budget for the next year, what actions does the Town plan to take to implement these plans? For example,

- Working with MBTA and allies to improve bus service, including restoration of the 79 bus
- Electrification of heating systems in town buildings
- Installation of flashing pedestrian beacons, such as the City of Cambridge has installed on Mass. Ave.
- Improvements to snow and ice removal to facilitate walking to schools and in the business district

*These examples were just general indications of type.*

**Reply from the Town Manager:** In no particular order, here is further detail about our sustainability/transportation related work:

### **Building Electrification**

The Town has engaged CMTA to prepare an Electrification and Air Quality Master Plan for the following school buildings with aging HVAC infrastructure:

- Ottoson Middle School
- Dallin Elementary School

- Bishop Elementary School
- Hardy Elementary School
- Peirce Elementary School
- Brackett Elementary School

This process involves first creating an existing conditions inventory and assessment of the HVAC, building management systems, domestic hot water, plumbing and electrical systems. Then, CMTA will conceptually develop alternatives, including geothermal, variable refrigerant flow and expanded solar systems, based on individual site assessments. Finally, an investment plan to include an alternatives analysis with budget level estimates will be developed with an eye towards fully electrifying the buildings.

### **Transportation Planning/MBTA Advocacy**

The Town has recently entered into a contract with the design firm Stantec to design permanent improvements to both the Mass Ave/Appleton intersection as well as the Chestnut/Mystic intersection. Both of these efforts are being funded by the mobility funds included in the capital budget which were enabled by the override in 2019. Additionally, we are working to hire a firm to prepare a study and make recommendations for improving crosswalk safety for all unsignalized crosswalks on Mass Ave from the Cambridge border to the intersection Mass Ave and Bartlett. We envision that such a study will include the eventual installation of pedestrian flashing beacons.

In regard to the MBTA, the Town is in regular communication with T staff and we have been very focused on the T's proposed bus network redesign. Through this process we continue to advocate for improved bus service along the Mass Ave corridor as well as for improved bus service to other transit access points.

### **Fleet Electrification**

The Town continues to look for ways to either hybridize or electrify vehicles in the municipal fleet. The most recent investments have been in 3 hybrid police cruisers in FY22 which are expected to be delivered soon and our plan to order 3 more hybrid cruisers in FY23. We are also investigating the purchase of a tool made available by the group Power Options which will help us analyze our potential for further fleet electrification as technology and vehicle offerings continue to improve.

In closing, while this list is not exhaustive, I think it provides a useful summary in regard to the investments we are planning stemming from both the Net Zero Action Plan and the Connect Arlington Plan. If you would like to discuss any of this further, please do not hesitate to ask.